

In re Application of GOLDS et al.  
Serial No. 09/768,098

**Amendments to the Claims:**

1. (currently amended) In a computer system, a method, comprising:  
maintaining static assigned numeric values in association with software modules, each software module having a static assigned numeric value, the assigned numeric values having a relative order and there being an unassigned value between any two assigned values; and  
executing the software modules in an order determined by each of the assigned numeric values, the order being deterministic and static.
2. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein executing the software modules comprises calling the software modules.
3. (original) The method of claim 2 wherein the software modules comprise filter drivers, and wherein calling the software modules includes passing file system requests thereto.
4. (original) The method of claim 3 wherein the file system requests comprise input-output request packets.
5. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the software modules are attached in a stack.

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6. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein executing the software modules in an order determined by each of the assigned numeric values includes maintaining an order.

7. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising evaluating criteria associated with the software modules, and wherein executing the software modules comprises selecting only software module that meet the criteria for execution.

8. (original) The method of claim 7 wherein the software modules comprise filter drivers, and wherein evaluating criteria associated with the software modules comprises evaluating a file system request.

9. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising, assigning an assigned numeric value to a software module.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 9 further comprising, classifying a software module based on a type thereof, and wherein the assigned numeric value corresponds to the type.

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11. (currently amended) In a computer system, a mechanism comprising:

a plurality of software modules, each software module having a static assigned numeric value indicative of a relative order; and

an ordering mechanism configured to evaluate each static assigned numeric value and to arrange the software modules for execution in a relative order determined by the assigned numeric values, the order being deterministic and static.

12. (original) The mechanism of claim 11 wherein the ordering mechanism arranges the software modules by attaching them in a stacked configuration.

13. (original) The mechanism of claim 11 wherein the software modules comprise filter drivers.

14. (original) The mechanism of claim 11 wherein the software modules are configured to handle input-output request packets.

15. (original) The mechanism of claim 11 further comprising an operating system for passing file system requests to the filter drivers.

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16. (currently amended) The mechanism of claim 11 wherein the software modules comprise filter drivers, and further comprising a filter manager, the filter manager including the ordering mechanism and further configured to call the filter drivers in the relative order determined by the assigned numeric values.

17. (original) The mechanism of claim 16 wherein the filter manager calls the filter drivers to handle a file system request.

18. (original) The mechanism of claim 17 wherein the filter manager is configured to evaluate criteria associated with the file system request prior to calling the filter drivers for execution in the relative order.

19. (currently amended) The mechanism of claim 11 wherein there is an unassigned numeric value between any two assigned values of any two software modules.

20. (currently amended) The mechanism of claim 11 wherein each assigned numeric value is unique to particular software modules.

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21. (currently amended) A tangible computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions, comprising:

maintaining static assigned values in association with filter drivers, each filter driver having an assigned numeric value, the assigned values having a relative order and there being an unassigned numeric value between any two assigned numeric values; and

executing the filter drivers in an order determined by each of the assigned numeric values, the order being deterministic and static.

22. (currently amended) The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions of claim 21 wherein executing the filter drivers in an order determined by each of the assigned numeric values includes attaching the filter drivers in a stack, and passing file system requests thereto.

23. (currently amended) The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions of claim 21 wherein executing the filter drivers in an order determined by each of the assigned numeric values includes calling the filter drivers in the order determined by each of the assigned values to pass file system requests thereto.

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24. (currently amended) A computer-implemented method, comprising:  
classifying software modules into groups based on types thereof;  
assigning each software module a static numeric value based on its group,  
each assigned numeric value having a relative order that is deterministic and static  
and there being an unassigned numeric value between any two assigned numeric  
values; and  
maintaining an association between each software module and its assigned  
numeric value.

25. (currently amended) A tangible computer-readable medium having  
computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 24.